

THROW DOWN THE BOX!

For Dr. Green
May all your treasure
travels be easy ones!

G. Thompson

Author To Visit Fair Days



George A. Thompson

George A. Thompson, a native of Park City, is well-known as an authority on both Utah and Western history. He has studied the history of Utah's mining, ghost towns, lost mines, treasures, and Rhoades Lost Mines. His books include *Treasure Mountain Home*, which he wrote with Frazer Buck, *Some Dreams Die*, *Lost Treasures on The Old Spanish Trail*, and *Throw Down The Box..*

Three of his books will be available to purchase during the Sidewalk Sale at the Flower Boutique, 50 North Main, across from the flea market. Mr. Thompson will be here to autograph your books and talk about his experiences on Saturday, Aug. 5.

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 to dispatch any more mail to Salt Lake City. Acting upon



WILLIAM H. RUSSELL
 Leader of a large emigrating company in 1846
 Founder of the Pony Express 1860-1861
 FROM "THE OVERLAND MAIL," BY HAFEN

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 adversaries. White settlers allied with Piute Indians

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attacked and killed one hundred and twenty-one men, women and children attached to the Fancher wagon train party, then making its way through the territory enroute to California. When President Buchanan received news of the disaster, he quickly dispatched an additional three thousand troops to Utah, bringing the army's strength to nearly six thousand. But by then the army was hopelessly bogged down, held prisoner by winter's snow at the burned-out ruins of Fort Bridger.

To retell the causes and misunderstandings which led to the Utah War is not pertinent to our tale of stagecoaching; suffice it to say that Brigham Young was not quite the tyrant he had been portrayed, nor was the federal government entirely without reason to believe that he was. Fortunately for both sides, cooler heads prevailed under the leadership of Colonel Thomas Kane, who, acting as an intermediary, was able to negotiate a peace treaty between both sides just as spring arrived in 1858. But during the hostilities much damage had been done, especially to stagecoaching.

From the time General Harney's troops left Fort Leavenworth, mail service between Independence and Salt Lake City slowed to a standstill. Huge quantities of mail piled up at the eastern end of the line, waiting until the road west was re-opened. Kimball's mail service had been forced out of business, while the contracts of other carriers had expired. The only mail arriving at Salt Lake City was being brought from California by George Chorpenning. Occasionally, some small amounts of mail had arrived at Salt Lake City via a rugged trail from southern California. The California legislature had appropriated funds to build a road through Cajon Pass, and the pioneer California stager, Phineas Banning of the Alexander & Banning stage line, apparently carried some mail as freight from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City on that newly built road.

During the Utah War, a new freighting company had been organized in the east to haul supplies to the army in Wyoming. Huge contracts had been let to a trio of partners to take almost unbelievable quantities of freight west. The contracts totaled more than six million dollars, and so great were the mountains of supplies to be moved that it required 4,500 wagons, 50,000 oxen, 4,000 mules and 5,000 teamsters! Profits were enormous, for some freight rates skyrocketed to as much as \$500 per ton! Who could organize and finance so great an undertaking? Three men of whom we shall soon learn a great deal more—William Russell, Alexander Majors and William Waddell, better known in freighting and stagecoach history as Russell, Majors & Waddell. And numbered among the small army of teamsters they employed was a young bull-whacker of whom we will also learn more, a teenage boy already a man. His name was Jack Gilmer.

The end of the Utah War marked a major turning point in the business of stagecoaching. Utah was no longer separate and apart from the Union, isolated a thousand miles from the east. Salt Lake City had become the main link in the long chain of stations joining east to west. Thousands of California-bound travellers began

using the wagon road to Camp Floyd, located forty miles south of the Mormon city, a road which had been upgraded and greatly improved by Russell, Majors & Waddell. Because of the interruption of mail service during the war, delivery of mail from Missouri to the Pacific had been irregular at best. But with the Overland Trail open once more, it seemed that everyone was trying to contact their friends and relatives in the west.

The U.S. Postal Service was very much aware of the need for an updated mail service, something better than the horse and wagon delivery seen in the past, and announced that bids for a stagecoach contract were being readied. In April, 1858, John Hockaday, a Missouri law student backed financially by a businessman named William Liggett, won the contract from Independence to Salt Lake City, last held by Kimball & Company. But where the earlier bid had been only \$13,500, Hockaday's winning low bid was \$190,000! He called his yet to be organized firm the Central Overland Mail. During the same bidding, George Chorpenning won the chance to keep his Salt Lake City to Sacramento contract, with a bid of \$130,000. The new contracts required Hockaday to deliver the mail to Salt Lake City in no more than twenty-two days, and for Chorpenning to carry it from there to Placerville in an additional sixteen days, the total time from Independence to Placerville not to exceed thirty-eight days. Unfortunately, the contracts did not specify the type of mail coach to be used.

The new contracts became effective in July, 1858, and resulted in the first dependable through service on the Overland Trail, placing the new service in direct competition with John Butterfield's southern route. Hockaday lost little time establishing his new line, although because of the contract's wording he offered little in the way of comfortable coaches, rest stations or accommodations. Still, within a year he was able to implement nearly semi-monthly service. But although he was young and energetic, outfitting the new enterprise had cost Hockaday a small fortune, and Liggett, his partner, reported that even with the faster and improved service, they were losing money. They had expected to benefit from a large passenger business, but mails that had backed up for more than a year filled every coach and wagon, leaving little room for paying passengers.

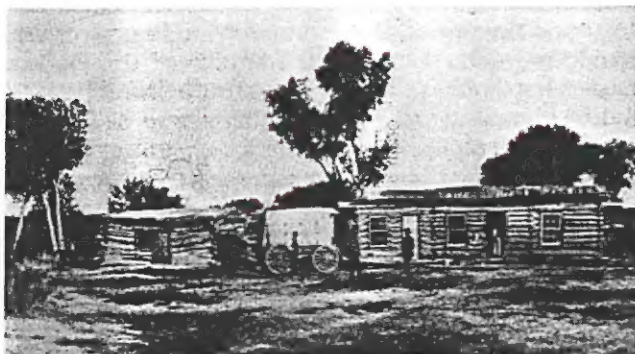
For a time things looked better for Chorpenning. Jared Crandell, the pioneer founder of the Hall & Crandell as well as the Crandell & Sutherland lines in California, moved to Salt Lake City where he became superintendent for Chorpenning. Chorpenning already had several ambulance wagons in service as stages, and with his appointment of Crandell as superintendent, he purchased ten new mud wagons. They arrived at Atchison, Kansas, in August, 1858, and from there were driven west for use on his desert route. Chorpenning still had few stations along his desert road, one section being without a single place to rest or change horses for two hundred miles. Still, working closely with Hockaday, they were able to cut their time to Califor-

nia from the required maximum of thirty-eight days to only twenty-five days.

With their combined lines, a challenge was issued to Butterfield and his Overland Mail Company. A message from President Buchanan was scheduled to be taken to California, and a lot of prestige would accrue to the stage company delivering it to San Francisco first. Besides, there was a great deal of controversy in the halls of Congress at that time, legislators being reluctant to fund both lines. Senators representing the southern states favored Butterfield's route, while those from the northern states preferred the Overland route. Whichever line won the race would greatly influence Congress and help ensure future appropriations for their route.

But, through a devious scheme, a copy of the President's message was smuggled to Butterfield, allowing his line to send the message west seven days before Hockaday received it. Even in the face of such base deceit, both Hockaday and Chorpenning called on their most skilled drivers and fastest horses to do the best they could. With his unfair advantage, Butterfield easily beat his northern competitors to San Francisco, but Hockaday and Chorpenning bettered his time by two full days, carrying the message to California in only seventeen days and twelve hours. At San Francisco, Butterfield's cheating was exposed and the victory was awarded to the northern line. Butterfield was furious, while President Buchanan was humiliated to see his friend lose the race.

It wasn't long before Hockaday and Chorpenning felt the wrath of the Buchanan administration's displeasure and began to pay the price for humiliating Butterfield. Hockaday was summoned to Washington to answer complaints of why he was unable to provide dependable and comfortable passenger service to Salt Lake City. The Postmaster General complained that the Overland Route was costing his department \$320,000 annually, while postal receipts brought in only \$5,400, inferring that somehow the huge deficits were the fault of the contractor. But when Hockaday questioned the quantity of second class mail he was expected to deliver, much of it outdated newspapers and periodicals more than a year old, he returned west to find even larger piles of heavy congressional reports and other govern-



A typical frontier stage station, with its attached "Hotel" de Starvation."

ment publications, most of which the Butterfield line had been carrying.

Chorpenning fared even worse, for his yearly pay was cut from \$130,000 to only \$80,000, while he was given the added requirement of increasing his service to a twice-per-month delivery. Already losing money on his line, and with debtors closing in from every side, Chorpenning was waging a losing battle. To add to his problems, one of his carriers and two of his pack mules froze to death in the Sierras, resulting in the loss of several sacks of mail. Washington officials only knew that the mail hadn't gotten through on time; why it didn't never concerned them. At that time a local contractor firm named Sanders & Dixon was carrying the mail over the Sierras to Mormon Station, and in their records is a description of the hazards of the trail, in the wording and spelling of the carrier.

The climat is very severe, intesly cold, the thermomitor stand in the middle of the day at 15 degrees below zero, colder than it is in Maine. Our breath freezes on our beard every time we go out, and hangs in isicles. The snow ever since last November has been 3 to 5 feet deep, and it will not melt befor April.

Bankrupt, and with his property seized by the sheriff, Chorpenning borrowed a coach and almost single-handedly delivered the mail to Placerville on time. There he loaded the eastern mail and drove his borrowed coach from town, but, exhausted and unable to pay for help, he knew he couldn't deliver the mail to Salt Lake City on time by coach. Just outside of town he loaded the mail bags onto pack horses and began the long race to Salt Lake City in order to save his contract. But somehow he was found out and his breach of contract was reported to Postmaster Brown at Washington. Brown canceled Chorpenning's long-held and hard-won contract, awarding the unfinished portion of it to Lewis, Brady & Company of California. Knowing how Chorpenning had been harassed and cheated, the postmaster at Salt Lake City refused to recognize Lewis & Brady's contract, or allow them to operate out of the post office there. Lewis, Brady & Company already had reservations about taking Chorpenning's contract, and declined to take over his route, so there was no mail service between Salt Lake City and Placerville during the winter of 1858-59.

Meanwhile, Hockaday was mentally wearied and physically exhausted from fighting the politicians at Washington, while his partner, Liggett, was financially ruined. On May 11, 1859, they sold the remaining portion of their contract to a new firm only recently established by John S. Jones and William Russell, incorporated as the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express Company. The transfer of the mail contract was a complicated one, involving the giant freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, and even Butterfield's Overland Mail Company. It is a tale of intrigue.

Some background information on the new Jones and Russell stage line is necessary in order to under-

ily beat his northern competitors to San Francisco, but Hockaday and Chorpenning bettered his time by two full days, carrying the message to California in only seventeen days and twelve hours. At San Francisco, Butterfield's cheating was exposed and the victory was awarded to the northern line. Butterfield was furious, while President Buchanan was humiliated to see his friend lose the race.

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stand how the freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell came into being, and how through money, mortgages and manipulation it gobbled up Jones & Russell. In 1848, James Brown was awarded a government freighting contract, and, in 1850, in order to finance an expansion of his business, he took in John S. Jones as a partner. Shortly thereafter, Brown died, leaving his company in control of Jones, who then took in William Russell as a financial backer. This was the same Russell who was a co-owner of Butterfield's Overland Mail. Jones, a Missourian, had been very successful in several frontier business ventures, so he assumed the firm's superintendency, leaving Russell as business manager. Under their joint partnership, their new company soon became a leading freight contractor, under the name Jones & Russell.

At an early age Russell had moved west to Missouri from his birthplace in Vermont. He became involved in a variety of businesses with several partners, among them William B. Waddell. Although a financial entrepreneur, Russell soon gained a reputation for questionable business practices, so another partner was added to Jones & Russell, Russell's old partner, William B. Waddell, who joined the firm in 1852. Waddell, a Virginian, had arrived in Missouri via the lead mining district of Illinois, where he had owned a real estate business and had engaged in railroad construction.

Although very capable in management skills, Jones knew little about the business of freighting or stagecoaching, so two years later, in 1854, Alexander Majors became still another member of the firm, to take charge of the day-to-day freight and coach operations. Majors, a native of Kentucky, was an ideal choice, a connoisseur of fine horses as well as having been one of the earliest freighters on the old Santa Fe Trail. Upon the addition of Majors, Jones became a director of the company. In only four years, all of the principals of the soon-to-be-organized Russell, Majors & Waddell freighting company had secured executive positions in the firm originally established by Jones, while Jones was no longer in a direct management position.

In his reminiscences, *Seventy Years On The Frontier*, Alexander Majors recalled the condition of the Hockaday stage line when he and his partners purchased it.

When we bought out the semi-monthly line of Hockaday & Liggett which was running from St. Joseph to Salt Lake City, they had only a few cheap coaches and few stations. They would run the stage team for several hundred miles, stopping every few hours to let them rest and graze. The year before we purchased their line, I made the trip in one of their coaches, which took twenty-one days, travelling in short intervals, day and night. When we bought them out, we built good stations every ten to fifteen miles, and ran a stage each way every day, and reduced their schedule to ten days.

While still under the control of Jones, the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express had spared no expense outfitting itself with the best equipment and

personnel available. Fifty of the first Concord coaches used on the Overland Trail were ordered from Abbot & Downing, the premiere coach builder of the day. One thousand of the finest Kentucky-bred horses were also purchased, along with five hundred strong Missouri mules, to be used on mountainous or difficult sections of the road. The first of the new Concords arrived at the Missouri, with half of them then taken to Cherry Creek (Denver), in May, 1859. When promissory notes paying for all of the new equipment, way stations, livestock and other expenses came due, the firm of Jones & Russell was unable to raise sufficient cash to pay the debt, so bonds were issued. Russell, Majors & Waddell then stepped forward to purchase the bonds, taking over Jones & Russell, and changing the line's name to the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express. Russell then controlled half of the Overland Stage and was a partner with Butterfield in his southern route, as well as being the senior partner in Russell, Majors & Waddell, in addition to having an interest in Wells Fargo & Company. Not bad for a Virginia farm boy!

The Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express had been organized in 1858 at the first reports of gold discoveries at Cherry Creek in western Kansas Territory, now the Denver, Colorado area. The "Pikes Peak Excitement" attracted thousands of miners and camp followers, and all of them wanted fast transportation to the new diggings. At that time both Majors and Waddell were hesitant to invest in Russell's takeover of Jones' stage line, neither believing the Cherry Creek mines would support such a venture. In later years Majors recalled: "I could not consent to investing in the Jones line, for I believed it impossible to make it pay, especially at such an early stage of the district's development, and I urgently advised Russell to let it alone." But the enterprise was so far along by then that Majors and Waddell had little choice but to support it.

As first planned by Jones, the firm's stage road had been surveyed via the direct route to the diggings, only 550 miles in length, but across a barren and nearly waterless prairie. As a practical matter, Russell had to change the line's route to follow more closely the old Overland Trail—along the Platte River into the southwest corner of present Nebraska and then southwest to Cherry Creek. It was a road 200 miles longer, but one with water and forage most of the way.

The first coaches left Fort Leavenworth on April 18, and arrived at Cherry Creek—by then becoming known as Denver—on May 7, 1859. In between the line's two terminals its first four passengers suffered through snow and freezing weather. They were offered only the poorest kind of meals at stage stops, usually consisting of thin bean soup, hard bread and cold coffee. Some of those early stations were rough places at best. In her *Fifteen Thousand Miles By Stage*, Carrie A. Strahorn described one of those stations, above the door of which hung a sign stating, "Hotel de Starvation." Mrs. Strahorn described the station as follows: "The station was a ten square foot combination parlor, kitchen and bunkhouse, 1,000 miles from either hay or grain, 70 miles

from any wood, 15 miles from the nearest water, but only twelve inches from Hell!" On one stretch of deep sand, the team gave out and the passengers had to walk twelve miles to the next station!

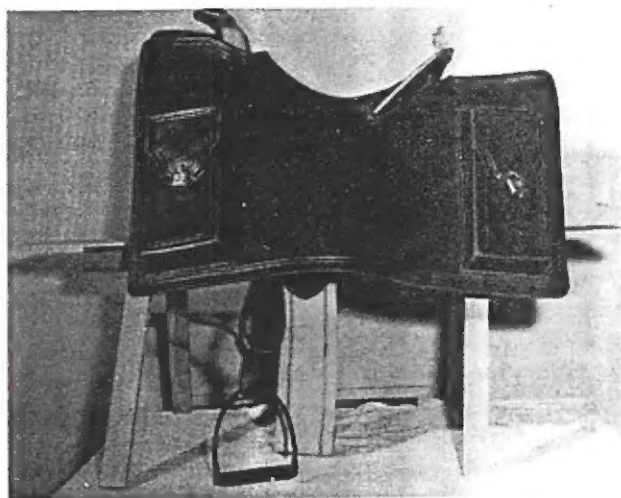
Denver was little more than a collection of rough board shacks where passengers could sleep on the floor for three dollars a night before continuing on to the mines. But as Majors and Waddell had feared, there was little gold at Denver. The easily found placers were soon worked out, and the hard rock mines being discovered would take years to develop. Thousands who had hurried west shouting "Pikes Peak or Bust!" were heading back east saying "Busted, by God!" Along the trail was a mock tombstone erected to scorn D.C. Oakes, one of the promoters of the Pikes Peak bust. Its epitaph read:

Here lies the body of D.C. Oakes,
Killed for starting the Pikes Peak hoax!

Although of the highest quality in every respect, their new stage line was not the overnight financial success Russell had hoped it would be. The "Pikes Peak Excitement" did not pan out like the gold rush in California had, and it was obvious that its hard rock mines would require large amounts of cash as well as lots of time to get into production. Also, the stage line was operating without a mail contract, a subsidy sorely needed. Freight costs were fifty cents a pound, while passenger fares were \$125, but still the company suffered terrible financial losses. Creditors demanding their money renamed the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express, the "Clean out of cash & past paying expenses"!

Falling ever deeper into a quagmire of debt and unable to obtain a mail subsidy, Russell, on his own, took a make-or-break gamble. Without informing his partners, he quietly began buying up large numbers of the best riding horses he could find. His agent at Salt Lake City alone purchased two hundred animals, at prices as high as \$200 each. At the same time he had his division supervisors connect all of the far-flung stations between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, into one continuous line. On long stretches of trail where few stations existed—such as along the old Chorpenning route—new stations were built, few more than twenty miles apart. Two hundred station agents and hundreds of stable hands and livery men were hired, in addition to eighty young pony riders, all lightweight and the best riders to be found. They had responded to an advertisement seeking skinny, young men who dared to risk their lives for Russell, Majors & Waddell, and who were willing to take an oath that while in their employ they would not use profane language, drink intoxicating liquors or quarrel or fight with any other employee of the firm. It was a hard creed to live up to, but in doing so the famed Pony Express was born.

Early in 1860, Russell informed his partners what he was planning, a fast pony express to carry the mail across the continent west of the Missouri, non-stop, day and night, across mountains and prairie, racing from station to station, each rider taking the mail from the other, on the run, all the way from St. Joseph to Sacra-



A Pony Express mochila, placed over the rider's saddle. The locked pouches contained express mail.

mento, in only ten days! Majors and Waddell were aghast. They were horrified at the huge sums of money Russell had already spent, and feared to think how much more would be needed. Even at the five dollars per ounce postal rate Russell planned to charge for letter mail, both said it could never be done. Nevertheless, the stations had been built, the riders hired and advertisements already placed; there was little they could do except to hope for the best.

The first rider, Johnny Frey, left St. Joseph just after sunset on April 3, 1860, riding a jet black horse. At almost exactly the same moment, Harry Roff left Sacramento, riding a pure white pony. Roff rode his first twenty miles in only fifty-nine minutes! The first Pony Express mail reached Salt Lake City from the west on April 7, only four days from Sacramento. The mail from St. Joseph arrived at Salt Lake City on the evening of the 9th, taking six days. The first westbound mail reached Sacramento in nine days and twenty-three hours, as close to Russell's projected ten days as possible; however, the eastbound mail took eleven days and twelve hours. The news of the election of President Lincoln was carried west in only eight days. The fastest time in which a message was delivered was Lincoln's inaugural address, carried 1,980 miles in seven days and seventeen hours! To all appearances, the Pony Express was a resounding success.

The route of the Pony Express was almost exactly the same as that of the Overland Mail; but unlike the stage which was seldom on schedule, the Pony Express maintained an almost precise schedule. The route left St. Joseph, Missouri, and crossed the Kickapoo Indian Reservation past Ash Point to Big Sandy Creek, then through the sand hills to the Platte River and west to Fort Kearney, Nebraska. Westward it continued via Plum Creek and Fremont Springs to Julesburg, Colorado, and on past Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock and Scott's Bluff to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. From there it crossed the Red Desert country to Fort Bridger, and across the

Wasatch Mountains to Salt Lake City. West of the territorial capital, the road followed the old Chorpensing route around the south end of the Great Salt Lake Desert to Ruby Valley and the Humboldt River in Nevada, which it followed to the sinks near Carson City. Across the Sierras it passed by Placerville and Folsom to Sacramento, from where the mail was taken to San Francisco by river steamer.

* Forty riders were in the saddle at any one time, through rain and snow, sleet and hail and dark of night. Each rider carried only fifteen to twenty pounds of letter mail, packed tightly into a special pouch called a mochila, which fit over the rider's saddle. Each succeeding month saw the route grow shorter, for the Overland Telegraph was being built from both ends of the line towards each other. Russell's great venture proved to be a success in every way except financially. The cost of operating the Pony Express was prohibitive and, as had been the case with Russell's Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express, he had no mail contract to help pay expenses. The Pony Express was a private venture—the mail carried was postmarked with the stamp of either the Pony Express or the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express.

With the reluctant investment of Majors and Waddell, Russell sank another \$200,000 into the great experiment, and then borrowed even more to keep the mail moving. Even at a charge of five dollars an ounce for letter mail, later cut to less than half that figure in hope of stimulating business, the losses were more than the company could stand. Alexander Majors later recalled the financial setback Russell's Pony Express cost their company:

It transpired that Russell, Majors & Waddell had to pay the entire expense of organizing and operating the Pony Express, at a loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars. We were to receive \$400,000 a year for carrying the mail as far as Salt Lake City, with Butterfield receiving the same from there to California, but not one cent was ever paid to us.

By July, 1861, the Overland Stage was again making almost regular trips along the same route, and when the Overland Telegraph was joined at Salt Lake City on October 24, 1861, the famed Pony Express died of malnutrition, only eighteen months after its birth.

* Even though the Pony Express was a financial disaster, Russell still had solid Washington connections, and he assured his partners that if they would purchase Hockaday's contract and take over the Chorpensing route, they were certain to win a \$900,000 mail contract. Already deep in debt, Majors and Waddell were forced to borrow still more money, and give a mortgage on their properties, but the banks assured them that they had a financier willing to purchase their bonds. With another large loan, Russell, Majors & Waddell lost no time consolidating the two lines under their new name, the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express, making for the first time a continuous stage line between Independence and Sacramento under one ownership. With

cash in hand, Russell, Majors & Waddell purchased new coaches and livestock for their cross-country line, and hired first-class men to operate it. Listed among those new employees was an ex-bullwhacker from their freight line, a proven employee now promoted to stage driver, a man whose name we have already seen, Jack Gilmer. Soon we will learn much more about him.

New roads were built, shortening the way west. Russell, Majors & Waddell returned to the old military road along the Platte River, with division superintendents placed in charge of each two hundred and fifty mile section of road. By the end of the year, the new stage line owners had reduced travel time to Salt Lake City to only ten days—twenty-five days to Placerville—and were running daily stages which averaged more than one hundred miles every day. It was a far cry from the ten miles a day thought to be good time only a few years earlier. During the summer of 1861, passengers could expect through service to California, barring unexpected mountain storms or an Indian attack. Also in 1861, Russell, Majors & Waddell gained a new president, a man named Bela Hughes. It wasn't a good move, but the partners didn't know that then. One of Hughes' first moves was to change the line's eastern terminus to Atchison, Kansas, shortening the route considerably. It wouldn't be his only change, as will soon be seen. Stage service was fast becoming first-rate, with meals costing only fifty cents at what were called "home stations"—places usually operated by married men.

Most early stage stations were built of logs, or of sod on the treeless prairies. They were seldom larger than one room, some having a lean-to shed added on. Split logs were used as rafters, covered with grass or prairie hay with loose dirt piled on top. Whenever it rained, muddy water would drip on everything below. At home stations there might be a small iron stove to cook on, but most had only a fireplace, while a few had only an open fire out front. Most stations couldn't even boast having a single chair, although a wooden packing crate might serve as a table where passengers could eat standing while teams were being changed. At relay stations, those located in between home stations, conditions weren't quite so elegant!

Russell, Majors & Waddell's acquisition of the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express, and their great experiment with the Pony Express, were only two examples of Russell's sometimes strange involvements in the world of high finance and politics. The secession of South Carolina from the Union in December, 1860, gave him still another opportunity to gain even tighter control over western transportation. With the start of the Civil War, Texas followed South Carolina in seceding, leaving John Butterfield's southern mail company in Confederate territory. Rather than have the line fall into rebel hands, the Postmaster General ordered Butterfield to discontinue service immediately, and to move all of the company's coaches, livestock and equipment north to the Overland Trail, a route already controlled by Russell, Majors & Waddell's cross-country line. The government agreed to pay Butterfield two months com-

pensation to help defray the cost of moving, but it proved to be only a token gesture, since he was already owed more than one million dollars which had not been paid, due to the failure of Congress to appropriate funds.

But by then disagreement over operation of the southern mail had brought about the replacement of Butterfield as head of the company, William Dinsmore taking his place. It will be recalled that Dinsmore had earlier been associated with Adams & Company's Express, and his name had also been on Butterfield's original contract, along with that of William Fargo. With Dinsmore's ties to Wells Fargo, he arranged to have the Overland Mail Company's property taken to St. Joseph, Missouri, where Wells Fargo was making plans to start a cross-country stagecoach and mail service. At the latest contract bidding, Wells Fargo had obtained the mail contract on the Overland Route, but they had no stagecoach business to handle the contract. But Dinsmore saw the folly of trying to operate over the same route that Russell, Majors & Waddell were already using for their stage line, so he agreed to sub-lease the eastern section of his contract to the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express, and the western part to the Pioneer Line, originally established by Frank Stevens but then owned by Louis McLane. By doing so he kept at least part of the business in the family, for McLane was then the California agent for Wells Fargo, and would soon become the firm's president.

In his great classic, *The Overland Stage To California*, Frank A. Root described how the deal was made:

Part of Butterfield's Overland Mail equipment was sold to the Overland California & Pikes Peak

Express, while the remainder, enough to completely stock a line, was moved to the Pioneer Line, for their Virginia City to Sacramento branch, owned by Louis McLane, later the president of Wells Fargo. The Pioneer Line was splendidly equipped with fine Concordes and six-horse teams. The Russell, Majors & Waddell line and the Pioneer Line formed the through line from Atchison to Sacramento, carrying the mails under the unexpired Butterfield contract.

Thus it was that Russell, with funds furnished by Majors and Waddell, purchased Jones & Russell to obtain the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express. He changed its name, and with Butterfield's contract, which was actually owned by Wells Fargo, began staging from Atchison to Sacramento. A Pinkerton detective could easily have lost his way following the maze of twisting trails plotted by John S. Jones, William B. Dinsmore and William H. Russell.

But still, Russell, Majors & Waddell had not received the huge mail contract Russell had assured them they would get, so more money had to be borrowed and additional mortgages on their stage line given, including all of the new equipment received from Butterfield's southern stage line. But again bankers told them there was no problem, for they had a financier anxious to loan them the needed funds, all he wanted was a mortgage to protect his money. Who was this man so willing to buy their bonds and pay for their indebtedness? He was a man they knew little of then, but one whose name they wouldn't soon forget. And perhaps it was only by coincidence, but he was a cousin of Bela Hughes, the new president of Russell, Majors & Waddell. His name was Benjamin F. Holladay.